

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL SWEARING-IN AND REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023 AT 6:15 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ashley Brady	Councilman Fred Gause
Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt	Councilman Donny Gerald
Councilman Ronald Atkinson	Councilwoman Tassie Lewis
Councilman Michael Baker	

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator	James Brogdon, City Attorney
Patricia Brown, City Treasurer	Bobby Jones, Police Captain
Lakesha Shannon, City Clerk	Kevin Hammond, Fire Chief

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

Newly elected councilmember Frederick Gause, and re-elected councilmembers Ronald Atkinson and Donny Gerald were all sworn in for a 4-year term.

Mr. Kevin Hammond was sworn in as the newly appointed fire chief for the City of Marion.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Brady led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS

Mayor Brady welcomed all citizens and guest.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- Special City Council Meeting – April 4, 2023
- Regular City Council Meeting – April 11, 2023

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve the minutes of the special city council meeting held on April 4, 2023, and regular city council meeting held on April 11, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. APRIL EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mayor Brady recognized Chandler Tisdale as the April Employee of the Month. He noted that Chandler is with the City of Marion Fire Department and serves as a firefighter and EMT.

6. APPOINT MAYOR PRO TEM

A motion was made by Councilman Donny Gerald, and seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to appoint Councilman Emerson Hunt as Mayor Pro Tem for a 2-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

7. PRESENTATION – PEE DEE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PDRTA)

Director of Finance Mrs. Samantha Mack, and Program/Project Manager Jordan D’Angelo were present to give an update on the new local PDRTA routes. Mr. D’Angelo stated that the new PDRTA Express route started in Marion County in January 2023. The Marion route included 168 passengers in February, 468 passengers in March, and 453 passengers in April. The Mullins route included 120 passengers in March, and 226 passengers in April. Mr. D’Angelo noted that there has been continued countywide growth, and new stops will be added to accommodate this growth.

Mrs. Mack announced that the new Marion County PDRTA office will open in June 2023. Four new route drivers have been hired to work out of this office, and they are currently in training. Mrs. Mack further stated that they have been working with Marion County Economic Development and the State Workforce Agency to create jobs and services to help get people back to work. She stated that the Marion to Myrtle Beach routes have increased over the past few months. They are also bringing more passengers into the City of Marion from Britton’s Neck and Gresham for shopping. In closing, she noted that there is a PDRTA app available to locate and track available routes.

8. 1st READING ON ORDINANCE 23-02 AN ORDINANCE TO SET MILLAGE FOR RAISING FUNDS TO ADOPT THE BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MARION FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that council would need to adopt the 2023-2024 budget ordinance for the upcoming fiscal year.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve 1st reading of Ordinance #23-02 An Ordinance to Set Millage for Raising Funds to Adopt the Budget for the City of Marion Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

9. 1st READING ON ORDINANCE 23-03 AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF MARION FOR THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that council would need to adopt the 2023-2024 hospitality tax revenues budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve 1st reading of Ordinance #23-03 An Ordinance to Appropriate Hospitality Revenues for the

City of Marion for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, and carried unanimously.

10. 1st READING ON ORDINANCE 23-04 AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE AND ESTABLISH STORMWATER REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF MARION FOR THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that council would need to adopt the 2023-2024 stormwater revenues budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve 1st reading of Ordinance #23-04 An Ordinance to appropriate and Establish Stormwater Revenues for the City of Marion for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

11. APPROVE BIDS

➤ **Sidewalk Replacement**

Mayor Brady stated that the city received a CTC grant in the amount of \$75,000 for sidewalk replacements. There was one bid received from Herrington Construction for \$8.24 per square feet. Councilman Ronald Atkinson asked if there is any reason why only one bid was received for all three projects on the agenda. Mr. Alan Ammons stated that the CTC Committee has noted that there are so many paving jobs available throughout the state, and contractors now have a lot of projects to choose from. He added that the project was advertised locally and statewide; however, the city does not receive as many bids for projects as they did years ago. Following discussion, ***a motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to approve the bid of \$8.24 per square feet from Herrington Construction. The motion was seconded by Councilman Donny Gerald, and carried unanimously.***

➤ **Sign Post**

Mayor Brady stated that this project will be for the decorative sign posts to be installed from Liberty Street down South Main Street. He noted that this is only for the posts and does not include the signs.

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to approve the bid of \$5,670.00 from Hi Tec Signs. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

➤ **Pickup Truck -Fire Department**

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that the city has FEMA funds remaining from Hurricanes Floyd and Matthew that can only be spent on certain items. He recommends that the funding be used to purchase a new heavy-duty pickup truck for the fire department. This truck can be used to pull a boat, fuel etc. in the event of a flood. He explained that this is the second bid for a pickup truck the city has tried to purchase that was sold before council could approve the purchase. Mayor Brady requested that council approve funding in the amount of \$58,000 to allow himself and Mr. Ammons to purchase a pickup truck immediately when one becomes available.

A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve \$58,000, and allow Mayor Brady and Mr. Ammons to purchase a new heavy-duty pickup truck for the fire department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

12. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

➤ **Juliann Healy – City of Marion Code of Ordinance Regarding Livestock**

Mrs. Healy was not in attendance to address council on this matter.

13. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Alan Ammons stated that the architects have finished the plans for the city hall renovations. The project will be ready to advertise for bids within the next 30-45 days. He noted that upgrades will be made to the roof, doors, windows, the council chambers will have audio/video equipment installed, and the front lobby entrance will be upgraded with handicap accessible and safety features. He stated that the budget for this project is \$500,000.

Mr. Ammons stated that the construction of the Green Street Sports Complex is on schedule, and the irrigation system is currently being installed. The bids for the concession building and bathrooms will be advertised for bid next month. The proposed opening date for the sports complex is September 1, 2023.

Mr. Ammons stated that signs were installed last month at the Manning Street truck parking lot advising that parking is now prohibited. The county will be placing barricades in the driveways to further prohibit trucks from entering. There have been no updates from the county on a new truck parking area as of yet.

14. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney James Brogdon provided an update on the recent noise ordinance discussion by council. He provided a draft ordinance for council review. He included language to address the previous concerns of council, and to add exclusions for city events, and events on city property such as the Foxtrot. He noted that this is a start in preparing a final ordinance, and suggested that council reach out to him to discuss any further concerns that need to be addressed. Council had a lengthy discussion regarding the challenges of interpreting what is considered loud noise, and enforcing a noise ordinance.

Council agreed to further discuss this matter at next month's meeting, and to have Attorney Brogdon prepare a revised ordinance to address the additional concerns discussed in this meeting.

15. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady:

Mayor Brady announced some recent grant funding awarded to city which totaled nearly \$1 million. These grants include: CTC funding of \$75,000 for sidewalks, \$412,000 from the Healthcare Foundation for lighting at the Green Street Sports Complex, and \$575,000 for stormwater projects to replace storm drains on Spring Street, Bethlehem Street, Franklin Street and Park Street. He stated that another large grant announcement is forthcoming.

Councilman Gerald requested that the Catfish Creek fishing pier section in District #4 be dedicated to the late Councilman Joseph Frazier as he was very adamant about the project.

Mayor Brady stated that Mr. Harold Coleman with SCDOT has advised that they will be paving Manning Street, and across Main Street to Tom Gasque Ave as a result of the city's efforts in prohibiting truck parking on Manning Street.

Councilman Michael Baker:

Councilman Baker commented on the overgrown properties. He asked if the main through traffic areas of the city could be addressed more frequently.

Councilman Fred Gause:

Councilman Gause thanked the citizens of Marion for electing him to represent District #4. He commented that it is an honor to sit in the seat of the late great Councilman Joseph Frazier. He stated that he excited to join council, and represent this great city.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson:

Councilman Ronald Atkinson expressed his concerns with lawncare contractors leaving trucks parked in the road while cutting property's. He suggested that they put out cones or turn on flashing lights for safety.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt:

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt congratulated the newly elected and re-elected councilmembers. As always, he expressed the importance of health and asked that citizens work to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis:

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis also congratulated the newly elected and re-elected councilmembers. She asked that councilmembers take the oath of office seriously especially the words equally, fairly and impartially. She thanked the Marion County NAACP for the opportunity to be an advocate for bullying. She noted some recent cases of local bullying and asked that everyone do what they can to address this issue and protect all children.

Councilman Donny Gerald:

Councilman Donny Gerald congratulated Councilman Gause on his election and Councilman Atkinson on his re-election.

Mayor Brady presented the Employee of the Month Certificate to Chandler Tisdale. He was out on a fire call when he was earlier acknowledged in the meeting.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to go into executive session to discuss a Contractual Matter and Funding for Economic

Development. The motion was seconded by Councilman Donny Gerald. The motion carried unanimously.

17. POSSIBLE ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilman Fred Gause to return to regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Fred Gause to approve \$86,000 in ARP funding to purchase land behind Walmart in partnership with Marion County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business. ***A motion was made by Councilman Donny Gerald, and seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.***

Mayor Ashley Brady

Lakesha Y. Shannon, City Clerk